



Concordia

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Plan of action tabled at the January 15, 2003 Board of Governors meeting by Rector
Frederick Lowy:

ENSURING A SAFE AND SECURE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT

January 15, 200³ — Following the violent demonstration that occurred on September 9 causing the cancellation of the scheduled speech by former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and subsequent campus tension, it is clear that a number of specific actions are required to ensure a campus environment free of harassment and intimidation and to rebuild the reputation and image of Concordia University. The objectives of these actions are to:

1. Ensure respect for all individuals on campus and a safe and secure environment for learning and scholarship that permits open debate and tolerance of opposing views;
2. Optimize the advantages of the rich diversity of students, faculty and staff on Concordia University's campuses through academic initiatives, social and cultural activities;
3. Protect the learning space of the great majority of students at Concordia whose intentions are first and foremost to complete their education successfully and without interruption and who do not wish to be involved in contentious domestic or international issues such as the Palestinian – Israeli conflict;
4. Channel public awareness and the image of Concordia University locally, provincially, nationally and internationally in directions that coincide with the great progress we have made over the past ten years and in a manner that is consistent with our future goals and directions.

In order to accomplish these objectives, several steps have already been taken and several more will be taken immediately. These are part of a broad integrated action plan that encompasses short-term tactical actions and longer term strategic plans. It is an evolving plan that will be closely monitored such that adjustments can be made and new elements added as required. Some of its specific elements are outlined below.

Specific Actions Underway

1. A report for the Board of Governors and University Senate regarding the September 9, 2002, events is being distributed today for information. Discussion time will be scheduled for the February meeting once Board members have had the opportunity to study the report. The Director of Environmental Health and Safety was mandated "to identify direct and underlying causes leading up to the incident and to evaluate its impact in order to enable Concordia to learn from the experience and to take steps to prevent a recurrence." She conducted a comprehensive review of what led up to the events of September 9 and what happened on that day. She conducted interviews and reviewed videotapes and reports. The report is thorough and provides us with a road map of what we need to ensure the safety and security of our campus. An action plan is being developed to implement the recommendations.
2. In order to ensure a safe, secure and non-intimidating environment for learning and scholarship, current institutional policies and practices will be strictly, but reasonably, enforced. The university will take a firm and consistent stand with respect to the accepted principles and the policies that were outlined in the document distributed at the December Board of Governors meeting. In order to accomplish this goal several steps will be taken immediately:
 - a. Criteria as to what constitutes "crossing-the-line" with respect to the accepted principles will be established and publicized. Appropriate sanctions for contravening the criteria will be established and publicized.
 - b. A clearer articulation as to what is acceptable with respect to the display of posters, distribution of publications and the use of university space will be developed and published. Dean of Students and Security Department policies and practices regarding these institutional policies will be reviewed. Clearer instructions regarding observation, implementation and enforcement will be established.
 - c. A monitoring system will be in place to ensure that policies and guidelines are respected.
3. The university will continue to press for firm and direct action against individuals who have been identified as having committed violent acts, acts of intimidation, or other actions that contravene the university's Codes or provincial/municipal laws on September 9.
 - a. Hearings for several individuals charged under the Code of Rights & Responsibilities will be held over the next several weeks.
 - b. Individuals charged under the criminal code will be appearing in court over the next few weeks.
 - c. Non-students charged under the criminal code or for creating a hostile environment have received letters banning them from campus.
 - d. Investigations to identify and charge others involved in the violent demonstrations are continuing.

4. A planning and monitoring committee will be established to oversee the implementation and effectiveness of the plan. It will consider strategic and tactical issues and will be responsible for making recommendations for action as required. It will be chaired by the Executive Director, Rector's Cabinet and will meet regularly. The Rector and the Cabinet will be informed regularly of activities and issues.
5. A conflict-management advisor, Ms. Patricia Gabel, has been hired as a Special Advisor to the Rector on Conflict Analysis and Management. Ms. Gabel will serve as a resource to the Concordia University community on conflict analysis and conflict processes. She will also serve as a special Advisor to the Chair of the Board of Governors regarding Board governance procedures. Ms. Gabel has widespread experience in both Canada and the United States in conflict management, dispute resolution and cross-cultural negotiations.
6. In order to fill the Dean of Students' position, recently vacated due to Dr. Donald Boisvert's decision to resign, Dr. Charles Bertrand has been appointed Associate Vice-Rector, Student Life, and Interim Dean of Students. One of the challenges the university faces is maintaining an environment that supports the open exchange of ideas in a respectful and civil fashion. The events over the past several months confirm that we have work to do in this area, particularly in the area of student relations. Dr. Bertrand has the experience and knowledge of the university and of its stakeholders to provide effective advice and support. Dr. Bertrand has a distinguished record at Concordia, having served as Dean of Arts & Science, Vice-Rector, Services, and Acting Rector. He has agreed to serve pending a fundamental review of the administration of student affairs and the appointment of a new Dean of Students. Dr. Donald Boisvert has announced his intention to resign as Dean of Students in order to devote himself fully to teaching and research.
7. The Office of the Code of Rights and Responsibilities has been strengthened. Mr. Peter Côté has been seconded from his permanent position of coordinator of University Chaplaincy Services and has been appointed as the full-time interim Advisor on the Code of Rights & Responsibilities.
8. Reviews with respect to the Code of Rights and Responsibilities have been mandated.
 - a. A committee to review the university's Code of Rights and Responsibilities has been established under the Chairmanship of Me. Pierre Fréreau. The Committee will make recommendations to the Board of Governors before the end of the current academic year.
 - b. A committee to review the operations of the Office of the Code of Rights and Responsibilities has been established. It is chaired by Ms. Melanie Drew, Director of Health Services, and will make recommendations to the Rector.
9. Communications support to collaborate with the University Communications Department has been arranged. The objective is to enhance Concordia University's image and reputation in directions that sustain our strategic goals. The firm Columbia Communications has been appointed as consultants to Dr. Dennis Murphy on long-term strategies.

10. A university sponsored academic lecture series on Middle East Issues will be initiated. This will be directed by a committee, chaired by Dr. Elizabeth Sacca, Dean of Graduate Studies, which will include both student and faculty members.
11. Planning for a possible Concordia Centre for International and Cross-Cultural Dispute Resolution will be initiated. Our multi-ethnic, multi-cultural diversity is potentially one of our greatest strengths yet we have not taken sufficient advantage of this for research and learning in conflict management and dispute resolution. Ms. Gabel, who has recently been a Fellow-in-Residence at Harvard University's Weatherhead Centre for International Affairs will play a leading role, together with interested Concordia faculty members, in exploring the creation of an interdisciplinary centre. Once these efforts reach the stage of a formal proposal this will be considered by the appropriate academic bodies. When approved by Senate external funding will be sought.

The items listed above are some of the actions that are occurring as a direct result of the September 9 event. Other actions are being developed and will evolve over the next several months as work on the current plans and actions progress.

Frederick Lowy,
Rector and Vice-Chancellor
January 15, 2003